DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 460 296 CE 082 786

AUTHOR	Spera, Vincent; Williams, Andra
TITLE	School-to-Work Opportunities for All Youth: Intermediary Organizations and Expanding Options. School-to-Work Intermediary Project. Issue Brief.
INSTITUTION	Jobs for the Future, Boston, MA.; New Ways Workers National, San Francisco, CA.
SPONS AGENCY	National School-to-Work Opportunities Office, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2000-05-00
NOTE	15p.; For other Issue Briefs, see ED 444 023, ED 455 384 and CE 082 787.
AVAILABLE FROM	Jobs for the Future, 88 Broad Street, Boston, MA 02210 ($12). Tel: 617-728-4446; Fax: 617-728-4857; e-mail: crivera@jff.org; Web site: http://www.jff.org/. For full text: http://www.jff.org/pdfs%20and%20downloads/allyouth.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Access to Education; Community Programs; Definitions; Demonstration Programs; *Disabilities; *Education Work Relationship; Educational Legislation; *Educational Opportunities; Educational Practices; Educational Resources; Federal Legislation; Guidelines; Internet; *Linking Agents; Models; National Organizations; Nonprofit Organizations; *Out of School Youth; Outreach Programs; Partnerships in Education; Philanthropic Foundations; Postsecondary Education; Professional Associations; Public Policy; School Community Relationship; Secondary Education; World Wide Web
IDENTIFIERS	School to Work Opportunities Act 1994; Workforce Investment Act 1998

ABSTRACT

The School to Work Opportunities Act of 1994 requires that all young people, including young people with disabilities and out-of-school youth, have equal opportunities to participate in the activities funded by it. Local intermediary organizations that provide a critical convening role and offer services to core education and business partners can and are accelerating and deepening connections between those school-to-work (STW) efforts and organizations in their communities that are serving specific populations of young people. The following three steps can help STW intermediaries achieve the goal of extending STW opportunities to young people with disabilities and out-of-school youth: (1) identify potential allies and partners; (2) reach out and engage allies and partners; and (3) align resources through a community collaboration that serves young people. The National Transition Alliance of Youth with Disabilities, Business Coalition for Workforce Development, and Alternative Schools Network are among the many national groups that can provide intermediaries with additional contacts, support, and information. The following programs illustrate how local communities are working to better align their efforts: (1) Communities and Schools for Career Success (located in Springfield, Massachusetts); (2) the Sonoma County, California, School-to-Career

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

Partnership; and (3) the Marriot Foundation's program Bridges....from School to Work. (MN)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 460 296

SCHOOL TO WORK INTERMEDIARY PROJECT

ISSUE BRIEF

SCHOOL-TO-WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL YOUTH: INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATIONS AND EXPANDING OPTIONS

VINCENT SPERA AND ANDRA WILLIAMS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
M.S. Miller
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CE082786

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE

SCHOOL-TO-WORK INTERMEDIARY PROJECT

MAY 2000

Partners
Jobs for the Future

New Ways Workers
National

AFL-CIO Working for America Institute

Bay Area School-to-Career Action Network

Boston Private Industry Council

Center for Workforce Preparation, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Corporation for Business, Work, and Learning

National Alliance of Business

Funded by the National School-to-Work Office, a Joint Initiative of the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education

ISSUE

SCHOOL-TO-WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL YOUTH: INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATIONS AND EXPANDING OPTIONS

By Vincent Spera and Andra Williams
National Alliance of Business

The School To Work Opportunities Act of 1994 requires that *all* young people have equal opportunities to participate in the activities it funds. This Issue Brief addresses the potential of intermediary organizations to create, enhance, and support connections among schools, employers, and other community partners to achieve that goal. It explores ways in which these brokering and connecting organizations create effective links with agencies, organizations, and programs whose mission is to serve special populations, particularly youth with disabilities and out-of-school youth.

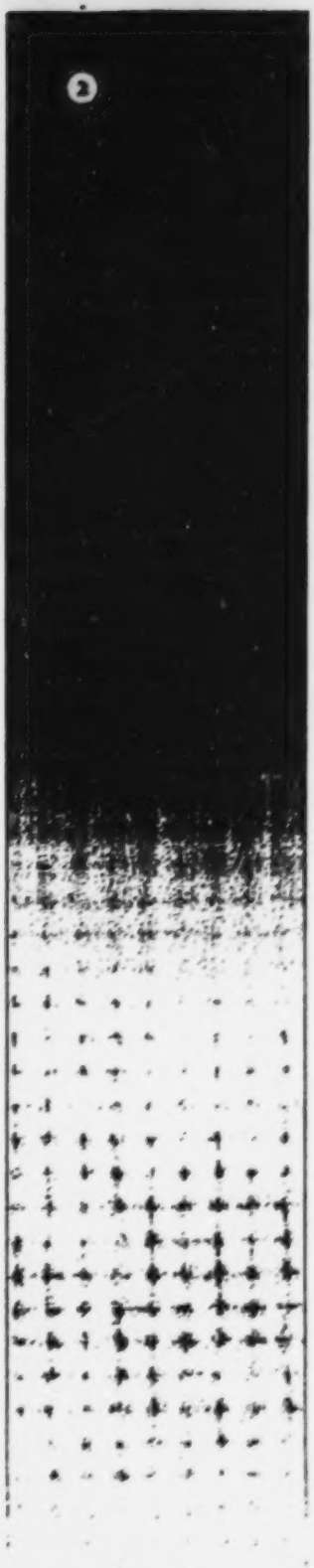
Historically, federal education and workforce development legislation has targeted funding to specific populations, spelling out strategies for serving those populations. Typically, the resulting federal programs have seeded and sustained local and state efforts and institutions dedicated to advocating for these groups.

The School To Work Opportunities Act departed dramatically from that model. Rather than target "categorical funds" to specific populations, it promoted opportunities for all students to participate in core school-to-work activities designed to increase academic achievement and expand career opportunities. Yet the act was flexible in how local partnerships and programs should achieve that goal, directing them to use methods appropriate to each community.

This Issue Brief focuses on what local intermediary organizations—those organizations that provide a critical convening role and offer services to core education and business partners—can and are doing to accelerate and deepen connections between school-to-work efforts and organizations in their communities that are serving specific populations of young people. It examines specific networks and funding streams that can help intermediaries serve the needs of the populations most often specified in categorical legislation: youth with disabilities and out-of-school youth.

How can school-to-work initiatives improve outreach to all students by working with organizations that serve targeted constituencies? This Brief examines three steps to help school-to-work intermediaries achieve that goal:

1. *Identify potential allies and partners:* Which local organizations and programs serve these populations?



2. *Reach out and engage allies and partners:* What strategies can establish ongoing, effective channels of communication with organizations and programs serving specific populations?

3. *Align resources through a community collaboration that serves young people:* What youth-focused resources are flowing into the community? What are the most promising opportunities to integrate categorical funding streams and programs into an overall effort to link schools, employers, and other community resources?

Step 1. Identifying Potential Allies and Partners

To promote a school-to-work system that serves all young people effectively, including out-of-school youth and youth with disabilities, the first step for intermediaries is to identify key local organizations and networks serving those populations. While most school-to-work organizations are aware of some of these groups within their own community, good sources of information on potential allies include the primary national networks and organizations that target youth with disabilities and out-of-school youth. The national groups listed below can provide intermediaries with additional contacts, support, and information needed to tap relevant local networks.

Youth with Disabilities

The National Transition Alliance of Youth with Disabilities is an important network whose mission is to help improve transitions from school to work. NTA members provide technical assistance to states and communities; they also disseminate tools and resources to help state-level policymakers and local practitioners ease the transition of youth with disabilities into higher levels of education and meaningful training and career opportunities. *National Transition Alliance, Transition Research Institute, University of Illinois, 113 Children's Research Center, 51 Gerty Drive, Champaign, IL 61820, (217)333-2325, www.dssc.org/nta.*

The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities is a clearinghouse for resources and information on strategies to serve youth with disabilities through education and training. *National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, P.O. Box 1492, Washington, DC 20013, (800)695-0285, www.nichcy.org.*

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education works to advance strategies to serve youth with disabilities through state policy and practice. The association can provide state contacts, as well as information about state policies and strategies to serve youth with disabilities. *National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 1800 Diagonal Road, King Street Station 1, Alexandria, VA 22314, (703)519-3800, www.nasdse.org.*

The National Transition Network works to strengthen the capacity of states to effectively improve transition and school-to-work policies, programs, and practices as they relate to youth with disabilities. In addition to direct technical assistance to states with projects, NTN develops and disseminates a variety of policy publications and other networking activities. *National Transition Network, Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, 103 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, (612)624-1062, www.ici.coled.umn.edu/ntn.*

The Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers serves as the coordinating office for local Technical Assistance to Parent Projects. These projects provide training and information to parents of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and professionals who work with children. The Alliance delivers technical assistance for establishing, developing, and coordinating projects to help parents participate more effectively with professionals in meeting the educational needs of children and youth with disabilities. *The Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Cen-*

ters, 4826 Chicago Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55417-1098, (612)827-2966, www.taalliance.org.

The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center at the University of Hawai'i Center on Disability Studies examines and evaluates the current status of educational supports provided for students with disabilities, including academic accommodations, adaptive equipment, case management and coordination, advocacy, personal counseling, and career advising. In doing so, it identifies effective support practices, models of delivery, and specific barriers to the provision of services. *Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, Center on Disability Studies University of Hawai'i, 1776 University Avenue, UA 4-6, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, Honolulu, HI 96822, (808)956-3975, www.rrtc.hawaii.edu.*

Out-of-School Youth

The 1998 Workforce Investment Act mandates the creation of local Youth Councils to coordinate planning for youth services delivered under the act, targeting economically disadvantaged and out-of-school youth. These councils are likely to provide significant opportunities to improve coordination among local youth-serving institutions, including partnerships between school-to-work efforts and organizations that target out-of-school youth. Youth Council membership is broad-based, typically including employers, educators, youth service professionals, representatives of the juvenile justice system, and others.

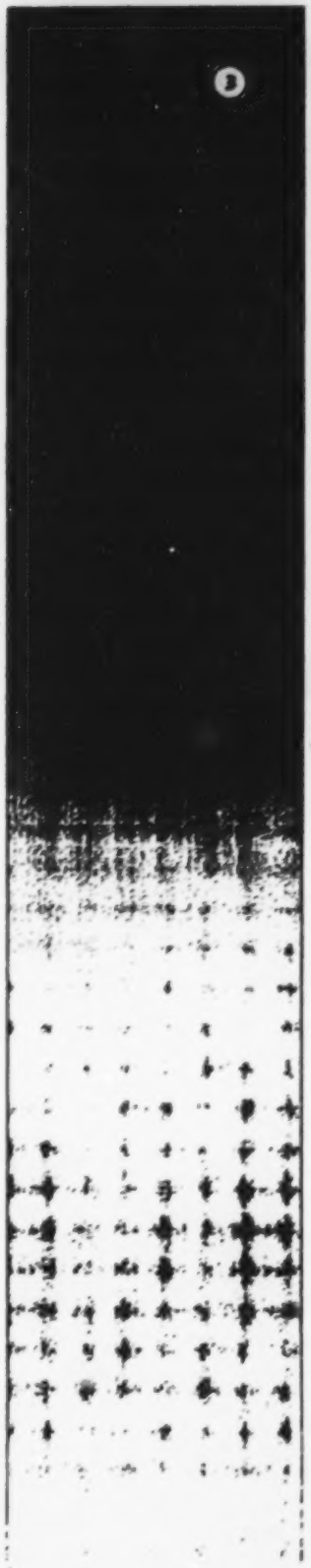
The Business Coalition for Workforce Development's Website provides products and services related to the Workforce Investment Act. The coalition, managed by the National Alliance of Business, is a diverse group of national business organizations and corporate representatives interested in workforce development and in helping implement effective workforce systems in their communities. *Business Coalition for Workforce Development, c/o National Alliance of Business, 1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20005, (800)787-2848, www.workforceinfo.net.*

The Web site www.usworkforce.org is designed to provide answers to current and emerging questions about implementation of the Workforce Investment Act. Part of America's Jobs Network, it is a collaboration between public- and private-sector groups and individuals to provide access to workforce information and resources and to apply that information toward innovative and effective partnerships and programs. *Office of Career Transition Assistance, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room S4231, Washington, DC 20210, (202)219-7831.*

For more information on Youth Councils, contact the *National Association of Workforce Boards, 1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20005, (202)289-2950, www.nawb.org* or the *Youth Office, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20210, (800)USA-JOBS, www.yomovement.org.*

The National Youth Employment Coalition has more than 100 members among national, state, and local youth employment and development organizations. The coalition shares information on policies and programs, provides networking opportunities for individuals and organizations, and analyzes activities at the national, state, and local levels. *National Youth Employment Coalition, 1836 Jefferson Place, NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202)659-1064, www.nyec.org.*

The Alternative Schools Network emphasizes quality education for inner-city youth, with a particular focus on returning dropouts. It helps community-based organizations and programs develop and build upon existing education and training programs. The network has compiled a vast array of information on federal, state, and local resources and on best practices of alternative schools that serve returning dropouts and others outside the mainstream public system. *Alternative*



Schools Network, 1807 West Sunnyside, Suite 1D, Chicago, IL 60640, (773)728-4030, members.aol.com/AltSchools, altschools@aol.com.

The National Association of Service and Conservation Corps convenes and networks more than 100 service and conservation corps in 38 states. These organizations provide opportunities for at-risk and out-of-school youth to build academic and career skills through experiences in serving their environment and community. Many NASCC affiliates are committed to school-to-work principles. *National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, 666 11th Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20001, (202)737-6272, www.nascc.org.*

YouthBuild is a national network of 100 local youth and community development organizations that serve at-risk and out-of-school youth through programs that integrate work-based and classroom-based learning opportunities. Program participants focus on the construction trades, primarily building and rebuilding housing in low-income neighborhoods and communities. Individual sites seek state and local funds; the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has invested more than $200 million in YouthBuild since 1993. In 1999, Youth Build's federal allocation was $42.5 million. *YouthBuild USA, 58 Day Street, Somerville, MA 02144, (617)623-9900, www.youthbuild.org.*

Job Corps, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, provides out-of-school youth with residential training that promotes enhanced employment opportunities. Increasingly, Job Corps sites are embracing many

The Workforce Investment Act, Youth Councils, and Collaboration: Louisville, Kentucky

In a growing number of communities, school-to-work partnerships and intermediary organizations are working closely with the emerging Youth Councils and Workforce Investment Boards mandated under the Workforce Investment Act.

In creating its local Youth Council, the Workforce Investment Board in Louisville, Kentucky, has engaged key community organizations and institutions that serve young people, including the local school district. These organizations recognized the benefits of coming together to identify populations being served, leverage resources and avoid duplication, and share information about results. Important school-to-work intermediaries, such as Greater Louisville, Inc. (the metro Chamber of Commerce), now work with the Youth Council to improve the coordination of local youth services for both in-school and out-of-school youth.

As part of local efforts to apply school-to-work best practices to working with both in-school and out-of-school youth, the Workforce Investment Board recently received a Youth Opportunities Grant for Project Empower. The project is designed to engage youth living in Louisville's Enterprise Community, where poverty rates reach 83 percent and the drop-out rate averages 54 percent.

In the first year of the grant, career agents based at Empowerment Centers will help 450 in-school and 1,150 out-of-school youth learn to craft individualized career plans that address employment, skills acquisition, and personal and leadership development. The goal is to create productive, responsible citizens by expanding their horizons, increasing their short- and long-term employability, connecting them with their community, and increasing their understanding of the value of work and lifelong learning.

The local Workforce Investment Board is the lead agency for Project Empower, and the Youth Council is responsible for programmatic oversight. Among the key service and sustainability partners are the Mayor's Office of Youth Development, Jefferson County Public Schools, the Kentucky Department for Vocational Rehabilitation, Welfare to Work, Job Corps, employers, and community- and faith-based organizations.

For more information: *contact Greater Louisville, Inc., 600 W. Main Street, Suite 517, Louisville, KY 40202 (502)625-0089, www.greaterlouisville.com*

school-to-work principles. As graduates continue to demonstrate that they are building the skills required for success in today's workplaces, the more than 130 local Job Corps Centers have expanded their outreach to employers and other community organizations to provide more meaningful opportunities for young people. *Office of Job Corps, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Room N-4510, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20210, (800)733-JOBS, www.jobcorps.org.*

Step II. Reaching Out and Engaging Allies and Partners

After identifying potential allies and partners, the next step is contacting these organizations and developing effective working relationships. Success in reaching out to and engaging allies and partners requires an assessment of the potential benefits for each party. This means examining: 1) how greater levels of collaboration would benefit the school-to-work system as a whole and help achieve its goals and objectives; and 2) the potential of greater levels of collaboration to improve and expand quality services to young people with special needs. Effective, sustainable coordination rests upon clear, identifiable benefits for each of the partners.

To foster collaboration between school-to-work initiatives and allies among organizations targeting special populations, intermediaries can help the potential partners identify common concerns and priorities, then assist in the alignment of vision, goals, and program activities. In these discussions, intermediaries can help parties define and specify important, mutual benefits of cooperation, such as:

- Less duplication and competition in outreach to employers;
- Improved coordination in language for marketing their efforts effectively to the public and potential allies; and
- More efficient investments of scarce resources.

Sometimes, the costs of collaboration will outweigh the benefits: the lack of significant overlap in vision, goals, or program activities can inhibit efforts to increase collaboration across efforts serving particular populations (as can personality conflicts, turf issues, and fears of losing control of resources). Still, in many cases, a more integrated plan for serving a community's youth may be welcomed when goals and services align or overlap and organizations are willing to engage new partners.

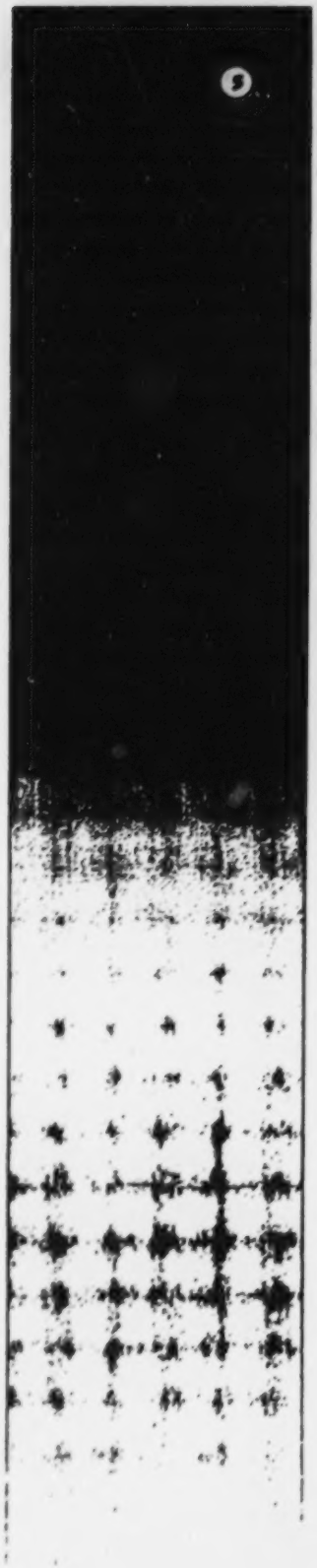
Convening potential allies and partners is critical to determining the value of collaboration. Through planning and strategy meetings designed to identify and align goals and activities, potential allies and partners can build the level of comfort with one another. They can develop "win-win" opportunities that do not threaten one group's existing resources, but rather provide opportunities for a more effective and better coordinated delivery of services to employers, educators, and young people.

Specific issues to discuss in these early conversations include:

- The possibility of conducting a community "resource mapping" exercise to jointly identify the range of resources available locally for youth services;
- Determining possible sources for integration of funding streams that have common objectives; and
- Identifying opportunities for joint or coordinated work, such as crafting messages to employers, committing to serving students of varying needs, or promoting youth development.

Finding Common Ground

To make discussions with organizations serving youth with disabilities and out-of-school youth more productive, school-to-work efforts and the intermediary organizations that help implement them need to understand and address important issues that are specific to each population.



Youth with disabilities: There is great variation among young people with disabilities, from those with severe mental disabilities to those with relatively minor physical disabilities. Depending on the severity and type of disability being addressed, the services provided for youth with disabilities can align very closely with or vary greatly from services provided through mainstream school-to-work activities.

A "checklist" of questions can help focus strategic discussions with organizations serving youth with disabilities:

- Does the organization provide opportunities for youth with disabilities to engage in work-based and community-based learning?
- Does the organization create workplace accommodations that allow a young person to participate in broader education and workforce activities? To what degree have employers been willing to adapt work environments to accommodate youth with disabilities?
- Does the organization have long-term relationships with particular employers that it wants to maintain? Does it seek to expand the pool of employers with which it works?
- What resistance has the organization encountered—from educators, employers, and others? What strategies has it used to overcome that resistance?

Out-of-School Youth: Conversations with organizations serving out-of-school youth should also assess the degree of commonality with schools and other organizations serving in-school youth. Are the efforts' goals related? Do the organizations provide similar or very different services to young people?

As the potential partners assess the alignment of interests, and perhaps activities, several questions can point to opportunities for, and challenges to, coordination and collaboration:

- How does the organization serving out-of-school youth reach young people? What is the target population?

Inclusionary School-to-Work Strategies
Kansas City, Missouri

Soon after its founding in 1996, the Business/Education Expectations (BE^2) School-to-Career Partnership in Kansas City, Missouri, created an All Students Inclusion Team. The partnership, covering a nine-county metropolitan area in Missouri and Kansas, collaborates with local partnerships, school districts, employers, and civic and community-based organizations to share ideas, leverage resources, convene leadership, provide technical assistance, fund educational innovation, showcase best practices, develop evaluation strategies, and provide resources for marketing and communications.

The All Students Inclusion Team was chartered to identify and provide support to eight other functional teams to ensure successful participation for all students in the region's school-to-work system. Toward these ends:

- The All Students Inclusion Team conducted a series of constituent focus groups with students, parents, teachers, and employers to help identify the successes and challenges of efforts to include all students in school-to-work activities. The team shared the results with the other planning groups for use during their deliberations.
- The team identified best-practice models of inclusion for consideration by other teams.
- The team developed presentations on inclusion aimed at teachers and employers for use at conferences and speaking engagements. This presentation has been used at a number of conferences.

On an ongoing basis, the All Students Inclusion Team serves as the "conscience" of the School-to-Career Partnership on strategies for reaching all students. By creating a functional team around the "all-students" issue, BE^2 has helped keep the subject on the table at partnership meetings and when any of the functional teams consider programming.

For more information: *contact BE^2: School-to-Career Partnership, 3132 Pennsylvania, Kansas City, MO 64111, (816)751-4125, www.be2.org*

- Does the organization combine youth development and workforce development activities? Is this combination central to the organization's strategy for encouraging out-of-school youth to take control of their future education and careers?
- What are the organization's funding sources? Is it funded primarily through federal legislation, local institutions (including the schools), or private contributions?
- With which national networks and organizations does the organization participate? How does involvement with these national groups facilitate alignment with other community activities that target different youth populations?

Step III. Aligning Resources: A Youth-Serving Community Collaboration

Ultimately, resources are the glue that holds new or growing partnerships together—or divides them. The challenge to intermediaries and the community as a whole is to help school-to-work organizations—including those with missions targeting special populations—align their activities in ways that emphasize efficiency and productivity but do not threaten turf battles over scarce resources. Initially, this requires that intermediaries foster or join conversations among potential partners to determine issues of common concern and identify the opportunities and mechanisms for aligning and coordinating activities.

These conversations should not center initially on which organization should fund which specific services. Rather, they should emphasize opportunities for leverage: how can activities that different organizations currently support serve more students more efficiently with the same pool of money? Such exchanges can improve strategic thinking about the use of existing funding streams to reach the largest number of young people.

Many organizations focused on youth with disabilities and out-of-school youth are dependent upon categorical, program-oriented, funding streams. In seeking to align activities with groups serving special populations, school-to-work partnerships and intermediaries need to know about these categorical funds, as well as the legislative and administrative framework behind them.

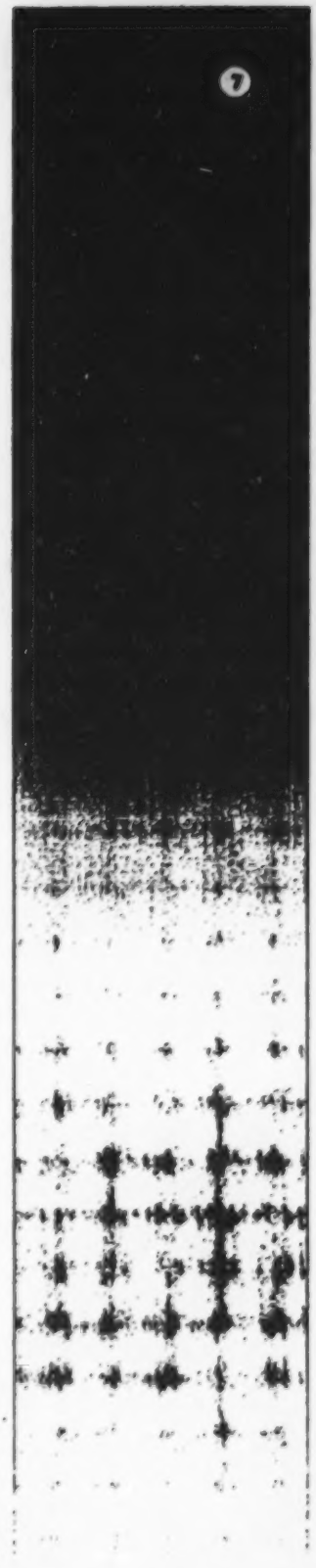
Serving Youth with Disabilities

Federal, state, and local support of education and training services for youth with disabilities has a strong history, starting in 1975 with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Through these efforts, youth with disabilities have benefited from programs that share many principles with school-to-work initiatives. In particular, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act mandates that students develop Individualized Education Programs, in partnership with teachers and counselors, to map out pathways to future education and careers.

At the state and local levels, special education professionals provide extensive support to schools and students to ensure that Individualized Education Programs are designed to help youth with disabilities meet their full potential. This work, in turn, is shared among and supported by leading organizations and networks at the national level.

Periodic amendments and updates to IDEA continue to reflect the changing nature of education and work. The most recent amendments, in 1997, encourage an increasing emphasis on promoting high academic standards and holding schools accountable for results.

Overseeing IDEA and other federal funding streams for youth with disabilities is the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. OSEP provides grants and contracts that support free and public education for individuals with disabilities up to age 21. OSEP also works to ensure that states and communities comply with IDEA, providing grants to states to help them



meet federal regulations. It oversees all federal funding for special education available to states, communities, and schools. *U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, 330 C Street, SW, Washington, DC 20202, (202)205-5507, www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/index.html.*

Most in-school funds for youth with disabilities are administered through state special education offices. These state offices, in turn, work with local school districts to align funds to meet the needs of students. Intermediaries need to be aware of this pattern in the flow of funding—from the federal government, to the states, and then to school districts.

Out-of-School Youth

As with services for youth with disabilities, discrete funding streams have traditionally supported organizations and networks for out-of-school youth. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Job Training Partnership Act directly funded programs that provided employment training to individuals. Specific segments of JTPA directly targeted out-of-school youth, including funding for work-based learning activities during the summer. Based on experience with JTPA and other federal and private investments, the federal government has created additional funding streams for effective programs that combine school and employment for out-of-school youth. These programs include *YouthBuild* and *Job Corps*.

In 1998, the Workforce Investment Act replaced JTPA. On the community level, local Workforce Investment Boards determine the allocation of funds under the act. WIA has also brought a new emphasis on out-of-school youth, and youth development and school-to-work principles guide the act's youth provisions and priorities. As a result, the new workforce legislation has provided school-to-work intermediaries with ways to support collaborative efforts with the public workforce development system.

Lessons from the Field: Opportunity and Programming for All Young People

The divisions between programs that serve in-school youth and those serving out-of-school youth are historically deep, as are those for programs serving mainstream youth and youth with disabilities. Sometimes, distrust, cultural gulfs, and funding issues are difficult to overcome, yet if "serving all students" is to become a reality, communities will need to significantly improve coordination and collaboration among these diverse efforts.

The School To Work Opportunities Act set in motion opportunities to overcome some of the existing fragmentation, and the Workforce Investment Act, through the Workforce Investment Boards and Youth Councils, provides further impetus for improving the alignment of projects and priorities. In some communities, progress has begun already, with emerging examples of how school-to-work initiatives and efforts for serving special populations can effectively join up to expand and strengthen youth-serving efforts in their communities.

The following examples are designed to highlight how local communities and programs are working to better align their efforts:

- Communities and Schools for Career Success (CS^2), in Springfield, Massachusetts, has helped school-to-work grow from a pilot program at two schools to a citywide effort serving both in-school and out-of-school youth.
- The Sonoma County, California, School-to-Career Partnership leverages funds from its school-to-work grant with those from other streams—including the Workforce Investment Act and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)—to build a system that serves a broad base of young people.
- The Marriott Foundation's *Bridges . . . from school to work* operates in six cities across the

United States to connect youth with disabilities who are preparing to exit high school with paid work placements.

Collaborating with Community-Based Organizations: Springfield Communities and Schools for Career Success

Springfield Communities and Schools for Career Success (CS^2) is a leading site for a nationally recognized capacity-building initiative in Massachusetts focused on school-to-work, education reform, and youth development. It has created a strong, sustainable school-to-work intermediary structure operating out of the Springfield Public Schools. Since its 1994 inception, school-to-work has grown to a citywide effort serving both in-school and out-of-school youth.

Central to CS^2 are its "school-community entrepreneurs," who helped design the city's school-to-work system and staff the local partnership. CS^2 entrepreneurs are both "change agents" within the schools and "neutral ambassadors" to non-school partners. Through their work, CS^2 has engaged community-based organizations as active, valued partners in implementing Springfield's inclusive school-to-work agenda.

The CS^2 entrepreneurs in Springfield convinced the Local Partnership to establish a Provider Network of CBOs and other agencies. The network became another direct source for school-to-work services needed in the community. Prior to CS^2, some school personnel thought CBOs worked only with "problem kids," overlooking CBO expertise on life skills, job readiness, and career development. By the same token, CBOs had little knowledge of school access for non-certified personnel or how schools worked in general.

The entrepreneurs also convinced CS^2 and the Massachusetts Office for School-to-Work to reserve almost one-third of the city's school-to-work implementation grant—$100,000 per year for three years—for CBO-provided services. Direct services provided by CBOs participating in the network have included: training in workplace competencies and team-building; career orientation and life planning; college visits; job shadowing; internships; advocacy with government agencies; day care, health care, and other social service referrals; mentoring; and academic tutoring.

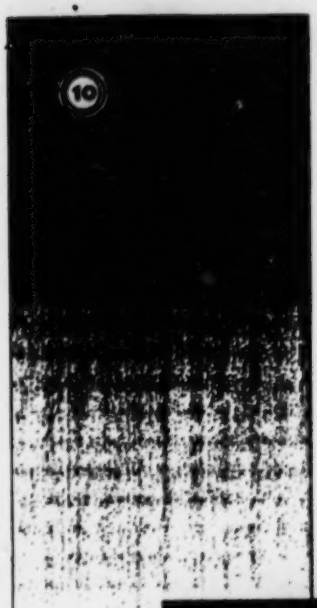
During the 1998-99 year, almost 1,000 youth received services through the Provider Network. In addition, bimonthly meetings of the Provider Network have served as a forum for facilitating collaboration, evaluating programming, addressing shared concerns, and discovering and filling gaps in the school-to-work system. The CS^2 entrepreneurs, meanwhile, serve a critical "school-CBO intermediary function" and advocate for CBOs within the school system.

For more information, see the case study of Springfield Communities and Schools for Career Success available through the School-to-Work Intermediary Project Web site: www.intermediarynetwork.org.

Blending Funding to Serve All Students: The Sonoma County STC Partnership

Providing high-quality, work-based learning experiences to a broad base of students requires funds from multiple sources. For several years, the Sonoma County (California) STC Partnership has used a combination of private, local, state, and federal dollars to support its emerging work-based learning system. The partnership considers its blending of funding streams to be absolutely essential for both system development and sustainability.

Federal dollars from the School To Work Opportunities Act support the infrastructure to link schools, students, employers, and community-based organizations. The partnership convenes key stakeholders through its network of six Regional Partnership Councils that develop those linkages and maintain the connection between students and the world of work. The partnership awards site grants to these councils, which are responsible for coordination and service delivery within their regions.



Besides the school-to-work funds, state TANF dollars and Workforce Investment Act funds support work-based learning for income-eligible youth (with 30 percent of WIA funding targeted for out-of-school youth). One-tenth of this money targets special projects to serve all youth, not just income-eligible youth. WIA funds also support the intermediary role of the Regional Partnership Councils, which allocate WIA funds. In addition, District and County Education funds programs for targeted populations, such as youth with disabilities and the children of migrant workers. These efforts link their population to workforce preparation activities.

Clearly, much of this funding comes with restrictions; blending these streams with money from unrestricted sources allows the partnership to serve all young people. Thus, employers throughout the county fund work-based learning opportunities. These include paid summer employment, internship opportunities and job shadowing events for students, and industry days and fellowships for teachers.

For more information, contact the Sonoma County STC Partnership, 5340 Skylane Boulevard, Santa Rosa, CA 95403, (707)524-2851, hramstad@scoe.org.

continued on page 12

An Industry Sector Approach

PASS IT*ON

PASS*IT*ON–Plan for Achieving Self-Support with Information Technology Opportunities Nationwide–prepares injured workers and people with disabilities for challenging, lifelong careers in information technology, while simultaneously addressing the industry's shortage of trained staff.

To launch PASS*IT*ON, the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA) teamed up with Community Options, which has ties to disability service providers in communities across the country. ITAA and Community Options then identified three regions in which they had mutual connections: New Jersey; Austin, Texas; and Northern Virginia. In each of these PASS*IT*ON locations, Community Options works with the service providers and ITAA works with regional business associations. Joining the effort are three institutions of higher learning: the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Austin Community College, and Northern Virginia Community College provide instruction, space, and administrative support.

In each region, ITAA forms a business advisory council for PASS*IT*ON, as well as for other school-to-work activities. The councils help develop curricula, assist in student selection, set up mentoring and internship opportunities, provide guest speakers for schools, organize job shadow days, and arrange tours of plants and technology institutes.

ITAA also seeks to address other employer needs. For example, to alleviate concerns about the cost of hiring people with disabilities, PASS*IT*ON provides information on tax credits, matching dollars, and other forms of government assistance.

Community Options works with state and private rehabilitation agencies to refer students to PASS*IT*ON. Local disability services providers assess the eligibility, basic skills, and adaptive needs of program applicants and support students in the classroom and for the first 90 days after placement in a job. To be selected, a student must be highly motivated and have good logical reasoning skills, a high school diploma or its equivalent, and the ability to learn in an accelerated educational environment.

PASS*IT*ON replicates Denver-based Computer Training for People with Disabilities. Over the last 17 years, the Denver program has had an average job placement rate of more than 90 percent; starting salaries for the class of 1997 ranged from $28,500 to $37,000 per year.

For more information: *see the ITAA web site: www.itaa.org or contact Darlene VanEvery, Senior Program Manager, Workforce Development, ITAA, 1616 N. Ft. Myer Drive, Suite 1300, Arlington, VA 22209, (703)284-5359. A National Transition Alliance for Youth with Disabilities Conference Call, May 27, 1999, also described PASS*IT*ON. To download a transcript, go to the Web site of the National Transition Network, ici2.coled.umn.edu/ntn.*

The School-to-Work Learning and Information Center, operated by the National School-to-Work Office, offers significant resources on serving specific populations. A number of the center's "Resource Bulletins" provide strategies for serving youth with disabilities and out-of-school youth. *School-to-Work Learning and Information Center, 400 Virginia Avenue, SW, Room 210, Washington, DC 20024, (800)251-7236, www.stw.ed.gov.* The Resource Bulletins are located at *www.stw.ed.gov/factsht/bulltoc.htm.*

In addition to the Learning Center and the organizations described in this Issue Brief, the following resources can help intermediaries develop, refine, and implement strategies for reaching out to and including organizations serving special populations in the broad range of school-to-work activities.

All Means All Checklist. A tool for accountability and evaluation in implementing school-to-work opportunities that serve all learners. To download, go to http://ici2.umn.edu/ntn/pub.

Directory of All Means All School-to-Work Award Sites. This directory contains profiles and contact information about model school-to-work projects that received a national All Means All Award for exemplary practices for including all youth, including youth with disabilities, in school-to-work. Published by the National Transition Network, Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development. To download award-site profiles, go to http://ici.umn.edu/all. For print copies, contact Mary Mack at (612)624-7579.

Employer Toolkit: Tools for Employers and Tools for Service Providers. Published by the National Transition Alliance and the Academy for Educational Development. To download, go to: www.dssc.org/nta/html/toolkit.htm. For print copies (quantities are limited), call (202)884-8182 or e-mail nta@aed.org.

Ensuring Access, Equity, and Quality for Students with Disabilities in School-to-Work Systems: A Guide to Federal Law and Policies. The legal rights of youth with disabilities in school-to-work programs in the context of existing legislation and policy. This tool for organizations considering providing direct services to youth with disabilities is published by the Center for Law and Education; the National Transition Network, Institute on Community Integration; and the University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development. To download, go to: ici.coled.umn.edu/ici, ici.coled.umn.edu/ntn. For print copies, contact the Institute on Community Integration at (612)624-4512 or the Center for Law and Education at (202)462-7687.

Getting a Second Chance: Developing a School-to-Work System for Out-of-School Youth. Available from Alternative Schools Network, 1807 West Sunnyside, Suite 1D, Chicago, IL 60640, (773)728-4030, altschools@aol.com, www.members.aol.com/AltSchools.

OCM/BOCES Transition Handbook. An overview of an "On-Site Vocational Program" that facilitates the transition of special needs students into the world of work through a variety of job or exploration experiences. To obtain a copy, contact the Onondaga-Cortland-Madison Board of Cooperative Education Services, 1710 NYS Route 13, Cortland, NY 13045, (607)753-9301, ext. 235, www.ocmboces.org.

Promising and Effective Practices Network. Youth-serving programs and organizations, including many focused on at-risk and out-of-school populations, that meet peer-recognized criteria for quality and effectiveness. For program descriptions, go to: www.nyec.org/pepnet/index.html or contact the National Youth Employment Coalition at (202)659-1064.

School-to-Work Partnerships and Youth Councils, by Robert Fleegler. This Issue Brief, prepared for the School-to-Work Intermediary Project, assesses the relationships that may between school-to-career partnerships and Youth Councils. It also describes the strategies that three local school-to-work partnerships are pursuing vis-a-vis Youth Councils. It is available through the project Web site: www.intermediarynetwork.org.

An Intermediary Serving Youth with Disabilities: The Marriott Foundation

As part of its mission to foster the employment of young people with disabilities, the Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities developed and operates *Bridges . . . from school to work*, a program that places youth preparing to exit high school in paid work placements. Since 1990, Bridges has placed more than 4,000 youth with over 1,200 employers in six metropolitan areas. Almost 90 percent of youth that complete the program receive offers of ongoing employment.

Bridges is both an exciting program in itself and a source of valuable experience and information for intermediaries and other who are addressing issues related to including youth with disabilities in school-to-work efforts. Connecting schools and employers, Bridges: 1) provides students with job training and work experiences that enhance their employment potential; and 2) helps employers access an often-overlooked source of entry-level workers. So that employer/employee relationships provide mutual benefits, each Bridges program engages in several intermediary activities, including outreach to employers, youth recruitment, workplace preparation, youth preparation, job matching, and ongoing support.

To assure that all parties benefit from the experience, Bridges focuses on: 1) the appropriateness of the job match; 2) the commitment and comfort of employer and employee with the employment situation; and 3) the availability of support to all parties as the employment relationship develops.

The foundation oversees all aspects of the Bridges programs through local project directors and staff, called employer representatives. The employer representatives work with employers to identify potential paid work placements and job requirements, develop appropriate job matches, help company personnel work effectively with students, provide on-site follow-up support to employers and students, and offer support to encourage long-term employer/employee relationships after the initial placement ends. There are six core foundation staff members, plus 50 site-based staff.

For more information, contact Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities, One Marriott Drive, Washington, DC 20058, (301)380-7771, www.marriottfoundation.org. A more detailed description of Bridges is available on the School-to-Work Intermediary Project Web site: www.intermediarynetwork.org.

The School-to-Work Intermediary Project

The School-to-Work Intermediary Project is designed to strengthen and raise the public profile of local organizations that connect schools, workplaces, and other community resources.

www.intermediarynetwork.org

Jobs for the Future
88 Broad Street, 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02110
(617)728-4446

New Ways Workers National
785 Market Street, Suite 950
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415)995-9860